

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-58905

Title: Artificial Intelligence and Assistive Technologies for Students with Disabilities in Inclusive Education: A PRISMA-Guided Systematic Review

Recommendation:

Accept as it is

Accept after minor revision.....

Accept after major revisionyes.....

Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality			Y	
Techn. Quality			Y	
Clarity			Y	
Significance			y	

Reviewer's ID: JPR-Dr.Shaweta Sachdeva

Detailed Reviewer's Report

1. The manuscript addresses an important and contemporary topic; however, the novelty and specific contribution of the review should be articulated more explicitly in comparison with existing systematic reviews on AI, assistive technologies, and inclusive education.
2. The review is described as PRISMA-guided, but the PRISMA flow process is incomplete. The manuscript reports 100 identified records and 27 retained studies but does not provide verified numbers for duplicates removed, records screened, full-text articles assessed, and studies excluded with reasons. These details should be provided wherever possible.
3. The intended publication period is 2015–2026, but the available Scopus dataset contains only publications from 2026. This creates a substantial mismatch between the stated review protocol and the actual evidence base. The authors should reconsider the review period or provide a stronger justification for using only 2026 records.
4. Since the analysis relies exclusively on Scopus, the possibility of database-selection bias is considerable. The authors should either expand the search to databases such as Web of Science, ERIC, IEEE Xplore, PubMed, or Google Scholar where appropriate, or strengthen the justification for limiting the review to Scopus.
5. The complete search string, search date, filters, and Scopus search results should be reported in sufficient detail to ensure reproducibility. At present, the manuscript provides the conceptual search blocks but does not fully document the execution of the search.
6. The eligibility criteria are generally clear, but the authors should explain how borderline studies were handled, particularly studies involving digital technologies that are not explicitly AI-based or assistive technologies.
7. The manuscript combines AI, conventional assistive technology, adaptive technology, digital accessibility technology, and generative AI. The conceptual distinction is useful, but the operational criteria used to classify a technology into these categories should be described more rigorously.

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8. The quality assessment using MMAT is appropriate for heterogeneous study designs; however, the manuscript should provide the actual MMAT appraisal results for the 27 included studies, preferably in a supplementary table or dedicated results table.
9. The manuscript states that quality assessment informed the synthesis, but it is unclear how differences in methodological quality affected interpretation of individual findings. This should be explained.
10. The data-extraction methodology should provide more information about who performed the extraction, whether extraction was independently conducted by multiple reviewers, and how disagreements were resolved.
11. The classification of study methodologies appears to be based partly on titles and abstracts, and the reported numbers of qualitative, quantitative, mixed-methods, and experimental studies appear to exceed the 27-study synthesis set. This issue should be carefully checked and corrected.
12. The manuscript would benefit from a more quantitative presentation of the findings. For example, frequencies of technology types, disability groups, educational levels, geographical regions, and reported outcomes could be presented through figures or more systematic tables.
13. Table 3 contains useful information, but the basis for assigning studies as "Direct," "Highly direct," "Related," or "Contextual" should be explicitly defined. These labels should not appear subjective without a documented coding procedure.
14. The review reports substantial geographical diversity, but the analysis should distinguish between country of study setting and author affiliation, because affiliation-based country counts do not necessarily represent where the intervention or research was conducted. The manuscript itself recognizes this limitation.
15. The discussion of educational outcomes is broad, but the authors should distinguish between measured outcomes and perceived/claimed benefits. Statements regarding improved academic achievement, motivation, autonomy, or self-efficacy should be linked to the actual evidence and study designs supporting them.
16. The manuscript appropriately avoids claiming direct causality in its analytical framework. Nevertheless, some statements in the Results and Discussion could still be interpreted as causal. The authors should ensure that the wording consistently reflects the observational and heterogeneous nature of the underlying evidence.
17. The proposed AI-Enabled Inclusive Education Framework is potentially one of the strongest contributions of the manuscript. However, the authors should explain more clearly how each layer of the framework was derived from the reviewed evidence and which studies support each relationship.
18. The framework is described as an evidence-informed analytical model rather than an empirically validated causal model. The authors should consider adding a validation or expert-evaluation pathway for future research to establish the framework's practical applicability.
19. The manuscript provides an extensive discussion of privacy, bias, accessibility, transparency, and human oversight. However, these issues should be connected more explicitly to evidence from the included studies, rather than being presented primarily as general concerns.
20. The research agenda is useful, but it could be strengthened by identifying specific methodological priorities, such as randomized/quasi-experimental studies, longitudinal studies, standardized outcome measures, cost-effectiveness analyses, and disability-specific evaluations.
21. The manuscript should discuss the possibility of publication bias and positive-outcome bias in greater depth, particularly because emerging AI research may disproportionately report successful applications. The limitation is acknowledged but deserves stronger methodological consideration.
22. The review should clarify whether generative AI studies were sufficiently represented among the 27 included studies to support the relatively extensive conclusions regarding generative AI.

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23. The authors should carefully verify all references, DOI information, author names, publication years, journal titles, and citation-reference correspondence, particularly because the review contains a large number of recent 2026 references.
24. There are several language, spacing, hyphenation, and formatting problems throughout the manuscript, such as missing spaces around words, inconsistent hyphenation, and PDF extraction-related formatting issues. A thorough English-language and formatting revision is recommended.
25. Some sections of the Introduction and Conceptual Background are repetitive, particularly the explanations distinguishing AI from assistive technology and the repeated discussion of accessibility, personalization, participation, and autonomy. These sections could be condensed to improve readability.
26. The manuscript should ensure consistent terminology for “students with disabilities,” “learners with disabilities,” “special educational needs,” and “disability groups,” and explain whether these terms are being used interchangeably or represent distinct populations.
27. The Results section would be stronger if it included cross-tabulation between technology type and disability group, and between technology type and educational outcome. This would provide more meaningful evidence than descriptive lists alone.
28. The manuscript should clearly differentiate conventional assistive technologies from AI-enabled assistive technologies when reporting benefits and barriers, because their implementation requirements and risks may differ considerably.
29. The limitations section is appropriate but should explicitly include the small final synthesis size (27 studies) and the consequences of using a dataset restricted entirely to 2026.
30. Overall, the manuscript has good potential and addresses a highly relevant research area, but substantial methodological clarification, data verification, strengthening of evidence synthesis, and language/formatting revision are required before it can be considered for publication.

Overall recommendation: Major Revision.